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10,129**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 9, 10, 13-20 and 22 are pending in this application. The Examiner rejected each of these claims. For the reasons stated below, Applicant believes all claims to be in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §102

The Examiner rejected claims 1, 9, 20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Tillie* (US 4,015,387). The Examiner contends that *Tillie* shows “a first flexible connector” and “a second flexible connector,” which the Examiner contends are inherently capable of snap fitting with the corresponding mating connectors. [Non-Final Office Action 2-13-06, p.2]. *Tillie*, however, does not show any snap fit connectors. The specification of *Tillie* makes clear that elements 12, 13, 14 and 15 are, in fact, filled with a hardenable or settable binder. [*Tillie*, col. 2, ll. 34-51, col. 5, ll. 34-50]. Indeed, there is nothing flexible about the connection of *Tillie* as core 2 of *Tillie*, which forms the cavity defined by elements 13, 14 and 15 is made from “a rigid” material. [*Tillie*, col. 3, ll. 54-61]. Because *Tillie* does not teach the claimed features, the rejection of claims 1, 9, 20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is improper and these claims are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. §103

The Examiner also rejects claim 10 based on the combination of *Tillie* in view of *Chang* (US 6,237,296) as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). For the reasons stated above, *Tillie* does not teach a flexible snap fit connector as required by claim 10. For this reason, claim 10 is in condition for allowance.

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The Examiner next rejects claims 1, 9, 20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Meyerson* (U.S. 6,314,701) in view of *Dinkel* (US 6,223,487). The Examiner acknowledges that *Meyerson* does not show a second snap fit connector on the first panel unit in a direction transverse to the first direction of a first snap fit connector. This feature is not taught by *Dinkel*, which at best only shows a mating connection, not a snap fit connection. Moreover, there is no motivation to make this combination. The Examiner contends that motivation exists "to allow for angular position of the panel units to form walls." [Non-Final Office Action, February 13, 2006, p.4]. However, nothing within *Meyerson* suggests a need to position walls in an angular fashion. Concomitantly, there is no need expressed in *Dinkel* for a snap fit connection. Accordingly, the rejection of claims 1, 9, 20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is improper.

The Examiner next rejected claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Meyerson* in view of *Dinkel* and *Chang*. For the reasons stated above, rejection of claim 10 is also improper. Accordingly, claim 10 is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner next rejected claims 13-16 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Dinkel* in view of *Meyerson*. As explained above, the combination of *Dinkel*, does not teach all of the features of the claimed invention. Specifically, claim 13 requires, "said first flexible snap fit connector engaging said first mating connector along the first direction" and "said second flexible snap fit connector engaging said second mating connector along the second direction transverse to said first direction." Nothing within the combination of references teaches snap fit connection

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along two different directions. For this reason alone, claim 13 and its dependents, claims 14-16, stand in condition for allowance.

Additionally, the Examiner contends motivation exists for the combination because it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify *Dinkel's* panel assembly by making the panel units with opposites in sandwiching an insulating body, and connectors being flexible snap fit, when connectors and mating connectors each comprise at least one of the opposite skins in the insulating body as taught by *Meyerson* to improve the structural integrity of the panels and the joints between adjacent panels. [Non-Final Office Action, February 13, 2006, p.6]. This motivation, however, is flawed. Specifically, the nature of the snap fit connection will likely decrease structural integrity of the concrete panels of *Dinkel* and the joints between adjacent panels because of the flexible and resilient nature of the connection. *Dinkel*, which has concrete walls, has a channel 704 that fits closely with insertion end 1302. [*Dinkel*, col. 11, ll. 25-30]. By making the connection resilient as taught by *Meyerson*, intersection of channel 704 and insertion end 1302 would be looser not stronger. Accordingly, the combination is improper. Therefore, claims 13-16 and 18 stand in condition for allowance.

The Examiner next rejects claims 10 and 19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Dinkel* in view of *Meyerson* and *Chang*. For the reasons stated above, this rejection is improper. Therefore, claim 10 and 19 stand in condition for allowance.

The Examiner next rejects claim 17 as unpatentable over *Dinkel* in view of *Meyerson* and *Korn*. Claim 17 requires a first panel unit having a first snap fit connector and a second snap fit connector, the first snap fit connector engaging a first mating connector along a first direction and the second snap fit connector engaging a second

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inating connector along a second direction transverse to the first direction. As explained previously, these features are not taught by the combination of references. There is no teaching of two snap fit connectors in the cited references on the same panel unit nor is there a teaching that these connectors mate along different directions. For this reason, claim 17 is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner next rejects claims 1, 9, 13-16, 18, 20 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Mazpule, et al.* (US 5,331,778) in view of *Meyerson*. In so doing, the Examiner readily acknowledges that the base reference, *Mazpule, et al.* fails to teach flexible snap fit connectors. Instead, the Examiner relies upon *Meyerson* for this feature. Claim 1 requires two flexible snap fit connectors engaging along different directions. *Mazpule, et al.* and *Meyerson*, either alone or in combination, do not teach this particular feature. For this reason, the rejection of these claims is improper.

The Examiner next rejected claim 19 as being unpatentable over *Mazpule, et al.* in view of *Meyerson* and *Kooji, et al.* (US 5,904,019). Again, there is no teaching of two flexible snap fit connectors engaging in different direction. For this reason, claim 18 is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner also rejected claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Mazpule, et al.* in view of *Meyerson* and *Korn*. Again, as explained above, there is no teaching in the combination of references to snap fit connectors engaging along two different directions. For this reason, claim 17 is in condition for allowance.

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For the foregoing reasons, Applicant requests allowance of claims 1, 9, 10, 13-20
and 22.

Respectfully submitted,

CARLSON, GASKEY & OLDS

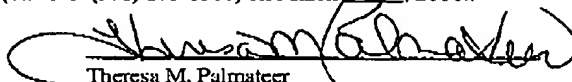
By: 

Anthony P. Cho
Registration No. 47,209
400 W. Maple Rd., Ste. 350
Birmingham, MI 48009
(248) 988-8360

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CERTIFICATE OF FACSIMILE

I hereby certify that this Response relative to Application Serial No. 10/631,193 is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. (571) 273-8300) on March 22, 2006..


Theresa M. Palmateer

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